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## Article Title: The Wright-Beauchampe Investigation and the Pawnee Threat of 1829

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Article Summary: The Pawnee tribe actively resisted the US Army and the white Americans moving west in the early nineteenth century. An outbreak of smallpox, increasing numbers of white invaders, and perpetual skirmishes with other tribes diminished the Pawnees' strength until they were placed on a reservation in Nebraska in 1854.

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Photographs / Images: Big Elk (Omaha), painted by George Catlin, 1832; Buffalo Bill, a Grand Pawnee warrior, painted by George Catlin, 1832; John Dougherty; map of Pawnee territory, showing the route of Wright and Beauchampe

# The Wright-Beauchampe Investigation

## AND THE PAWNEE THREAT OF 1829

*By Richard E. Jensen*

In the late 1820s most Pawnees believed the United States Army was weak and ineffectual and boasted that in a fight, "the Americans could be used up like Buffaloes in a chase."<sup>1</sup> This attitude prevailed at a time when the Pawnee tribe was possibly the most powerful on the Plains and when it was just beginning to feel pressure from white Americans. U.S. citizens were crossing Pawnee lands to reach the rich beaver streams in the Rocky Mountains and beyond, and the Pawnee viewed them as trespassers. The tribe resented the whites' arrogant attitude and general disregard for Pawnee rights. As a result, there was an increase in the number of "depredations" brought to the attention of the War Department. In this atmosphere of growing hostility the army ordered an investigation in 1829 to determine Pawnee intentions and to assess the possibility of a war. The information gathered by Lt. George Wright and Indian Subagent R. P. Beauchampe provides a glimpse into the conditions in the central Plains as seen by the whites, and records the seeds of conflict that would bedevil both parties for many years to come.

The potential for trouble had been recognized by observant visitors to the Plains, as well as by government officials. In 1823 Paul Wilhelm, a tourist from Germany, took an excursion up the Missouri River. He visited the Pawnee and considered tribal members to be friends of the Americans, but warned, "The Pawnees are extremely proud and

should they become hostile they would be exceedingly dangerous."<sup>2</sup> John Dougherty, the Pawnee agent, described the Pawnee as "the most powerful tribe on our borders" and in 1828 he reported "[Pawnee] conduct is becoming daily more and more outrageous." Dougherty was an experienced plainsman and to judge from his correspondence, was not a person to lose his head in an emergency or overstate a situation.<sup>3</sup>

Military personnel stationed in the West could not ignore the tribe's aggressive attitude because it was one of the most powerful on the Plains. In 1825 the army estimated the four bands, Republican, Grand, Loup, and Tappage, had a population of 10,250, including 2,050 classed as "warriors." They were superb horsemen, and some were armed with guns, while the rest had bows and arrows that could be shot with reasonable accuracy and amazing rapidity. A force of this size could not be taken lightly, especially when the entire American army consisted of only about 5,800 troops.<sup>4</sup>

Pawnee contempt for the U.S. military resulted, in part, from a miscalculation of the Americans' technological advantages and numerical superiority. A few Pawnees had visited St. Louis and the Spanish communities in the Southwest, but these towns were no larger than a Pawnee village and did not overawe the Indians. In 1805 two young men accompanied a Native American delegation to Washington, D.C., but it was not until 1821 that a committee of Pawnee leaders visited the capital.<sup>5</sup> Every effort was made to astound the delegates with U.S. military might. While the leaders may have been impressed, their de-

scriptions of what they had seen were probably not believed by Pawnee commoners. The events and scenes would have been so totally alien to the Pawnee experience that they would have been almost impossible to accept. A decade later John Treat Irving visited the Pawnee and noted that the general population was "too confident of their own prowess, and too ignorant of the power of the whites, to care much either for their friendship or their enmity."<sup>6</sup>

Occasionally the actions of the U.S. military reinforced Pawnee perceptions. In 1819 the army built Fort Atkinson at the Council Bluffs on the Missouri River, less than one hundred miles east of the Pawnee towns. At times the combined population of soldiers, their dependents, and civilian employees ballooned to nearly one thousand, but from the Indians' point of view it was a most unimpressive gathering.<sup>7</sup> The soldiers seemingly spent their time either hiding behind the walls of the fort or in the fields tending their gardens, which the Pawnee men considered work suitable only for women.

The army's mission was to establish friendly relations with area tribes and to eliminate intertribal wars. One means to accomplish this goal was to entertain tribal leaders and present them with valuable gifts, but the reasons for this generosity were not always understood by the Indians. Big Elk, chief of the Omaha tribe, visited the Fort Atkinson commander and voiced his amazement at the army's treatment of the Pawnee:

I have heard that the Pawnees have been to see you; a nation that has killed, robbed, and insulted your people. I was

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also informed that you feasted them, and at their departure you put weapons in their hands. I should not be surprised to hear, that those very weapons were stained with white man's blood before they reached the Pawnee village. This is what I cannot understand.<sup>8</sup>

The soldiers from Fort Atkinson were sent to battle an Indian tribe on only one occasion, but the action was so feeble it could only have contributed to Pawnee disdain. In the summer of 1823 the Arikara, linguistic and cultural cousins of the Loup band, killed several white fur trappers. Col. Henry Leavenworth, commander at Fort Atkinson, assembled his troops and raced up the Missouri to the Arikara town near the mouth of the Grand River. For several hours cannons placed on nearby hills bombarded the earthlodges, but the damage was slight and there were few casualties. When Leavenworth decided the Arikara had been punished enough, he attempted to elicit a promise of their future good behavior. After a truce was called to discuss these matters, the Arikara fled from their village and escaped. The Pawnee, who would have extracted a terrible revenge upon anyone who killed their countrymen, perceived Leavenworth's actions as timid if not cowardly. It was largely Leavenworth's ineffective reprisal that led the Pawnee to boast about chasing American soldiers like a herd of buffalo.<sup>9</sup> Pawnee contempt for the military was clearly revealed a year later when an army officer was briefly imprisoned at one of the villages. When the army ignored the insult it only intensified Pawnee disdain.<sup>10</sup>

The Pawnee tribe's diminishing respect for the military coincided with a marked increase in Pawnee contact with white civilians. By the mid-1820s eastern companies were sending brigades of hunters to the Rocky Mountains to trap beaver, while other organizations sent traders bound for Santa Fe. Both groups traveled through the heart of Pawnee country within sight of the villages, but they tended to ignore the tribe.<sup>11</sup> The traders and trappers carried



**Big Elk (Omaha), painted by George Catlin, 1832.** National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, gift of Mrs. Joseph Harrison, Jr.

a large assortment of trade goods, including guns and ammunition, to sell to tribes in the mountains or to the Mexicans in the Southwest. Most of these people were enemies of the Pawnee, and no one had to point out that the guns might be used against the tribe in some future battle.

The travelers also depleted natural resources along the trail. Timber in this area was always in short supply, and the travelers' campfires only made the situation worse. Hunting for food and for

sport substantially diminished the supply available to the Indians. The Pawnee resented these practices and responded by attempting to extract a toll from the travelers, who were viewed as trespassers. The whites believed they had the right to travel without restraint and regarded the tolls as highway robbery. Animosity grew on both sides, and complaints were filed concerning the increasing number of depredations.<sup>12</sup>

Compounding the problem were the Pawnee raiding parties that threatened

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**Buffalo Bull, a Grand Pawnee warrior, painted by George Catlin, 1832.** National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, gift of Mrs. Joseph Harrison, Jr.

U.S. traders on the trails to Santa Fe. In the 1820s two trails were used. One went up the Missouri, then turned west along the Platte and Loup rivers past the Pawnee villages, where the trace turned southwest to Santa Fe.<sup>13</sup> The other trail was a more direct and better-known route across present Kansas, but it was within range of Pawnee raiding parties. It would have been possible for Pawnees to disrupt travel on either trail or even close them entirely.

The year before the Wright-

Beauchampe investigation two caravans made a round trip to Santa Fe across present Kansas and suffered heavy losses on their return. As the first returning caravan of nearly eighty men approached the Cimarron River, Indians killed two members of the party, Daniel Munroe and a man named McKnees. The caravan's leaders also claimed to have lost an estimated one thousand horses and mules. The newspapers in Missouri blamed Pawnees, but the perpetrators were never identified with cer-

tainly. The second caravan of about thirty members had its horses and mules stolen and one man, John Means, was killed. It is reasonably certain Comanches attacked this second party. Regardless of the perpetrators, the deaths of three men and the substantial property losses inflamed public opinion in the West. The westerners also feared the Pawnee or some other tribe might increase the severity of their assaults to the point where the Platte Valley trail and even the Santa Fe Trail might be closed.<sup>14</sup>

Pawnee forays toward the Southwest had been going on long before the trail was used by U.S. citizens. The raids were so common even tourists who visited Indian country were aware of them. Paul Wilhelm learned about the raids during his visit to the Pawnee in 1823. He concluded, "The Pawnees are proud of the great damage which they in their time have inflicted upon the descendants of the Spaniards, and that even in the earliest times of the conquest they fought hard battles against the *Conquistadors*. Of the latter they still possess many trophies." The *Missouri Intelligencer* quoted Indian agent Benjamin O'Fallon in the same vein: The Pawnee "excel any nation known in the west. They have long been the terror of the Spaniards; robbing them of their horses, mules and property, travelling the greatest distances, and undergoing the most severe hardships to make war, in which they have been unusually victorious."<sup>15</sup>

The Pawnee tribe was not the only one causing trouble. In 1823 the Mexican government recruited an army of 1,300 men and sent them against the Navajo west of Santa Fe.<sup>16</sup> Upon the successful completion of this punitive action the Mexicans turned their attention to the Pawnee problem in the northeast. It was rumored an equally large force would be sent against them, but no expedition materialized, probably because the nation's treasury was depleted after the Navajo campaign. Instead of an army, a delegation of twenty-six civilians went to Fort Atkinson in September 1824 to attempt a settlement with the

Pawnee. They met with representatives of the tribe, the U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, and the U.S. Army.<sup>17</sup>

Unfortunately the parley was doomed from the beginning. The U.S. government feared the Mexicans might later use a formal treaty as evidence of ownership of land inhabited by the Pawnee, and the president issued strict orders to exclude the Mexicans from active participation. Secretary of War John C. Calhoun relayed his instructions to the Indian office:

Whilst the Executive feels anxious to adopt every measure which it can with propriety, to prevent the Depredations on the Spanish Frontier by the Indians residing within our limits, it is the impression that a Treaty with the Panis [Pawnee] Indians cannot with propriety be held by the Mexican Commissioners. You will accordingly instruct [Indian agent] Majr. O'Fallon that whatever arrangement may be made with the Indians must be made by him [O'Fallon] acting in behalf of the U. States, and not by the Mexican Commissioners, who can be viewed in no other light but as respectable Gentlemen without official authority.<sup>18</sup>

The American delegates also lacked "official authority" to sign a formal treaty. To do so would have required the signatures of all parties, plus ratification by the President of the United States with the consent of the Senate. Lacking this authorization the American delegates could only try to convince the Pawnee, through a combination of veiled threats and as many gifts as the Indian office could afford, that peace with Mexico was beneficial.

The Pawnees who attended the meeting did not trust the motives of the other participants and were probably not in a mood to make promises of peace. They feared the meeting was a trap to take them hostage and thereby prevent further raids. During his later investigation Lieutenant Wright learned that the Pawnees had carried as many guns and knives as they could hide under their blankets in case they had to fight for their freedom. Fortunately for everyone the precaution was unnecessary.<sup>19</sup>

Exactly what transpired at this meet-

ing was not recorded, but some kind of accord must have been reached, however temporary. A Missouri newspaper reported,

a treaty has been concluded between the Spaniards of Santa Fe and that province, and the Pawnee tribe of Indians. . . . Major O'Fallon has established peace between the belligerents, and this plundering warfare is no longer to be carried on. The Spaniards were highly delighted at the attention paid by our government to the request of their governor, and left Council Bluffs (26 in number) on the 11th ult. [September] for their native home. They can now make this long pilgrimage without fear of molestation.<sup>20</sup>

The meeting had no long-lasting effect. The following summer a Pawnee raiding party corralled a group of Mexican buffalo hunters west of Santa Fe and stripped them of nearly everything they had. The Pawnees recognized one of the hunters from the meeting at Fort Atkinson and in a courteous gesture, allowed him to keep his gun.<sup>21</sup>

A formal treaty between the United States and the Pawnee was authorized by the president and signed at Fort Atkinson in September 1825. It was an attempt to assure safe passage for Americans traveling across the Plains, but it made no reference to the Mexicans. The Pawnees agreed they would not "whilst on their distant excursions, molest or interrupt any American citizen or citizens, who may be passing from the United States to New Mexico, or returning from thence to the United States." Passage along the Platte Valley was also considered. The Pawnee signatories promised "to give safe conduct to all persons who may be legally authorized by the United States to pass through their country." In return the United States agreed to "extend to them [the Pawnee], from time to time, such benefits and acts of kindness as may be convenient, and seem just and proper to the President."<sup>22</sup>

It would require more than vague promises to convince the Pawnee to uphold the treaty. The extent to which the tribe complied stemmed from a realiza-

tion that they had become dependent upon the Americans for a variety of trade items that once were luxuries, but were fast becoming necessities. During his investigation Lieutenant Wright learned that at least one American party on the Santa Fe Trail had been saved from a raid because of this realization, but it was considered an exception.

The treaty created a dilemma for the Pawnee because strict compliance would jeopardize the tribe's position in a lucrative trade network. Horses and mules stolen in the Southwest gave the Pawnee a surplus, which could be traded to the Omaha and other horse-poor tribes. A few Americans may have understood the predicament the Pawnee faced, but at the same time whites expected strict compliance. When the treaty was broken they accused the tribe of treachery and dishonor.

On November 3, 1828, Dougherty wrote to Superintendent of Indian Affairs William Clark, expressing his concern about Pawnee conduct "becoming daily more and more outrageous." He complained that "they have already repeatedly violated the treaty [of 1825] in flagellating and otherwise cruelly beating several of our licensed traders and by their driving & pillaging the Santafee merchants on the U.S. road to New Mexico." Dougherty had learned that the Grand and Loup bands had left their villages in October for the winter hunt, "publicly declaiming their determination to rob & murder every white man who should have the misfortune to fall into their power." The agent warned that the Pawnee "have still great confidence in their own strength, believing themselves to be more numerous warlike & brave than any other nation on earth when spoken to by the traders of the power of the Americans, they say they would rejoice to see them arrayed in arms against them, that they are able to run them like Buffalo in the Prairie."

If this was not insult enough, Dougherty went on to relate that one of the war chiefs was publicly boasting "that the Santafee road should hence-



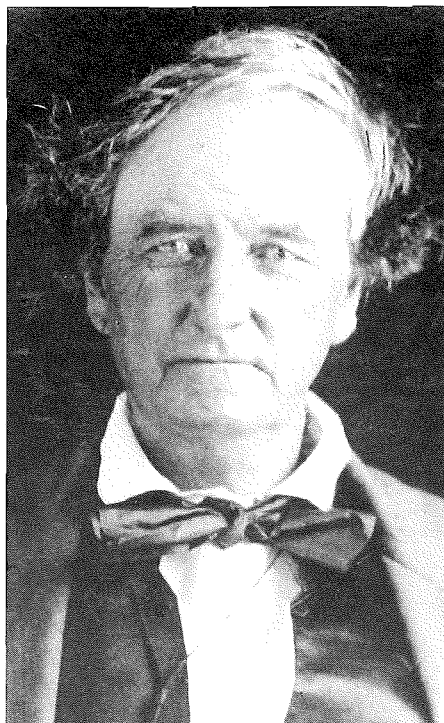
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forth become a home for himself and band for the purpose of plunder." Dougherty reasoned that part of this attitude was the Americans' own fault because the Pawnee had never been punished by the army for their depredations. If something were not done soon, "it will be impossible to say where or when their depredating warfare may terminate."<sup>23</sup>

Dougherty's report was taken seriously, and orders soon came from Secretary of War John Eaton to investigate the Pawnee. Ill health prevented Dougherty from joining the fact-finding tour so R. P. Beauchampe was sent in his place. Beauchampe was a relative newcomer to the West, having received his appointment as subagent for the Upper Missouri Agency on February 19, 1829. At the time of the investigation Beauchampe served as Dougherty's assistant at Fort Leavenworth.<sup>24</sup> Just one day after receiving his appointment Beauchampe was ordered to join an army detachment preparing to ascend the Missouri River and "collect and obtain all the correct information you can, both from white men and Indians relative to the hostile feelings of the several pawnee tribes towards the american citizens."<sup>25</sup>

Lt. George Wright also received orders to inquire into the situation. Wright was a young career officer on his first independent command. Born in 1803 at Norwich, Connecticut, he received his commission as a second lieutenant in 1822 and was assigned to the Third Regiment of Infantry. For the next four years he served at Fort Howard, west of Lake Michigan. In September 1826 Wright and most of the Third Infantry were transferred to the new Jefferson Barracks near St. Louis. In the spring most of his unit ascended the Missouri River to help establish Fort Leavenworth, following the abandonment of Fort Atkinson, but Wright stayed behind as regimental adjutant. Then on September 23, 1827, he was promoted to first lieutenant and sent to Fort Leavenworth, where he was stationed when the order came to begin the Pawnee investigation. Wright was placed in command of

a small detachment of the Third Infantry and left Fort Leavenworth in late February 1829. Lt. Edwin Burr Babbitt was second in command and kept a journal of the investigation.<sup>26</sup>



**John Dougherty.** Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis

After an uneventful trip up the Missouri River the detachment arrived at Cabanné's trading post, located on the Nebraska side of the river about fifty miles above the mouth of the Platte, and began questioning witnesses on March 6. Cabanné's was a major outfitting station for traders and trappers going west to the mountains, as well as for trade with local tribes. It was also an eastern terminus of the trail to Santa Fe that passed the Pawnee villages.<sup>27</sup>

On March 6, 1829, Louis La Jeunesse, one of Cabanné's employees who had just returned from an extended visit to the Pawnee Loups, was questioned. La Jeunesse said the Loups had sent separate war parties against the Crow, Arapaho, and Sioux. This latter party was led by Knife Chief and included

some Omaha men.<sup>28</sup> Wright also wanted to know if Pawnees had "injured" any whites during the past year. La Jeunesse told him they had not, but a group of Grand Pawnees had the opportunity to do so during an encounter on the Arkansas River. The Americans were not assaulted because the Grand chief reminded his people of the promises they had made in the 1825 treaty. The chief also added that because the Americans were the source of many valuable trade goods they should not be harmed.

Wright then wanted to know whether any of the Pawnees were in favor of attacking the Americans. La Jeunesse admitted some of the younger men probably would have beaten and robbed the Americans if it had not been for the chief's lecture. La Jeunesse assured Wright that the leading men of all of the bands spoke favorably of the Americans, and they always "make it a rule to send a reasonable man with the war parties on that account that the whites may not be injured." La Jeunesse failed to point out that older men with established reputations in the tribe had relatively little to gain by attacking the Americans or the Mexicans, while the younger men were still anxious to prove their worth. A successful raid was a sure means of status enhancement.

Next to be questioned was Martin Dorion, Cabanné's Omaha interpreter. Wright first asked him if traders could go safely to the Omaha village. Dorion said they could, with the exception of a few clerks who had been guilty of overcharging them in the past. Dorion then explained why some of the Omahas were contemptuous of the Americans. The daughter of Big Eyes, chief of the village on the Elkhorn River, had been accidentally killed in the home of one of Cabanné's clerks. Big Eyes threatened revenge unless blood money was paid, and when Cabanné gave in to the demand, some of the Omahas saw it as cowardice. Willow, an Omaha soldier, recommended they make threats and thereby force Cabanné to give them free trade goods.<sup>29</sup>

Dorion also told how a breach of protocol embittered some of the Pawnees. Big Nose, a Republican Pawnee, felt insulted when Agent Dougherty neglected to give medals to those Big Nose thought deserved them. Big Nose threatened to "make the Santa Fe road his home" and "do all the injury to the whites that he could." According to Dorion, Big Nose was an influential man and Dorion hinted he could be a problem.

Wright then asked Dorion if the Omaha or other tribes thought the Americans were afraid of the Pawnee. Dorion answered, "When I speak to the chiefs of the small tribes, and ask them why they wont listen to the views of their father, they reply why dont you scold at the Pawnees we are a small nation and you scold at us but the Pawnees are a large nation, and you are afraid of them."

When asked about depredations that Pawnees had committed, Dorion said a Pawnee Loup named Medicine Man had stolen five horses from Burdad Chapp, one of Cabanné's employees. Dorion said he had visited the Republican village the previous March "when a party returned with horses, mules, blankets, and scalps all of which was Spanish plunder."

At this point Babbitt interjected information from Jonathan L. Bean, sub-agent for the Sioux, which somewhat balances Dorion's ominous report.<sup>30</sup> Bean said the Omahas who lived in the village on the Missouri were very friendly with the Americans, but villagers on the Elkhorn River were less so. He mentioned the Sioux, who were at war with the Pawnee, but were "very well disposed towards us." Bean added that the Sioux would be a powerful ally in case of a war with the Pawnee.

Wright also questioned Big Elk, chief of the Omaha village on the Missouri River. Big Elk said the Pawnee "dont like the whites at all" and generally rob and injure them. As a reason for this treatment, said Big Elk, the Pawnee had come to realize a prolonged association with whites was invariably followed by

sickness. Under further questioning Big Elk admitted there were "no bands of Pawnees that love the whites," but there were two principal chiefs of the Loup band who "would go any length to serve the whites."<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately Big Elk was not asked why such a difference existed.

The next section of Babbitt's journal copied a long letter from Lucien Fontenelle to Beauchampe. Fontenelle came to Indian country about 1818 and five years later was stationed at Bellevue, a trading post on the Missouri River a few miles above the Platte. He was an experienced trader and was probably as knowledgeable a witness as the investigators were likely to find. Babbitt described him as "a Gentleman of high respectability and veracity."<sup>32</sup>

Fontenelle considered the Pawnee guilty of "a continuous stream of abuses" and listed fourteen that had occurred during the previous ten years. The first incident was an attack upon Maj. John Biddle and a party of scientists and six soldiers bound for the Council Bluffs in 1819. Fontenelle repeated what he had been told:

The Party was incamped & while several of the men were out hunting, They were rushed upon by a war party of Pawnis [Pawnee] who for the first thing after they entered the camp, pulled down an American flag which was then flying at the Major's Tent, Trampeled it & cut it to pieces. Then they took a parcel of dried meat that the Party had for subsistence together with a quantity of other articles . . . one of those articles I think was a spy glass which they snatched from the Majors side. They spoke harshly & abruptly to all those They addressed themselves to & made some Threats.

Fontenelle's report was based upon hearsay and contained exaggerations of Pawnee duplicity. The "scientific gentlemen" were a small contingent of the Yellowstone Expedition of 1819 under Biddle's command. The party stopped at the Kansa village on the Kansas River and after a cordial meeting, camped for the night a few miles away. Here they were confronted by some Republican Pawnee warriors. The major accused them of stealing "a small package of

very fine pounded meat," but later learned the Indian had received it as a gift. Biddle's tent was torn down, and his blanket, pistols, and "some small articles" were stolen, but some of the items were recovered the next day. Biddle admitted "no personal indignity was offered us." The biggest loss was the theft of their horse herd, and Biddle had to purchase replacements from the Kansa. There was no mention of the loss of the flag or the spyglass recalled by Fontenelle.<sup>33</sup>

Fontenelle briefly discussed the capture by Pawnees of a white man and his son, their rescue by the Indian agent, and their recuperation at a trading post near Cabanné's. Edwin James was at the Council Bluffs when the captives were released. He said the Pawnees

had made prisoners of two white hunters from the Arkansas, a father and son who had been found hunting in the Indian territories. These men had been liberated through the interference of some members of the Missouri Fur Company, and had recently arrived at Fort Lisa. During their captivity, they had been treated with such severity by the Pawnees, that they had often entreated an end might be put to their lives.<sup>34</sup>

Fontenelle had been told other stories that he included in his letter. He described the robbery and murder of a Mr. Stotts in the spring of 1821, but admitted he was unsure of the trader's name. In May 1823 Pierre Narcisse Leclerc was robbed by Pawnees when he was returning to Cabanné's post from the Omaha village on the Elkhorn River.<sup>35</sup> In October 1823 John Switzler, a citizen from Franklin, Missouri, was robbed "of his coat, blanket, & was forced to give up all the amunition he had after which they told him very politely to go on." He was stopped by Pawnees while on his way to retrieve furs cached by Thomas Fitzpatrick, probably on the upper North Platte River.<sup>36</sup>

The letter briefly outlined incidents on the Santa Fe Trail. Fontenelle recalled the theft of seventy mules and horses from one party on its return from Santa Fe in the winter of 1827. Another

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group left the Council Bluffs area in September 1827. They were halted at one of the Pawnee villages and forced to "pay a considerable amount of goods" before they were permitted to pass. In the spring of 1826 a Mr. Smith lost eighty mules while returning from Santa Fe.<sup>37</sup> In 1825 a man named Willows was robbed of "some Mules, Spiece [specie], Blankets &c" while on the Santa Fe Trail. This was probably Dr. Willard of St. Charles, Missouri, who made a round trip on the Santa Fe Trail in 1825.<sup>38</sup> Fontenelle was most vindictive when mentioning the theft of a hundred-dollar horse by the Grand Pawnees. It was Fontenelle who learned that the Pawnee chiefs were heavily armed when they met with the Spanish delegation at Fort Atkinson in 1824.

Fontenelle told about an army officer who "was shamefully treated by them [Pawnees] & kept part of a Day in confinement." The officer was Lt. George Hampton Crosman, who was leading a small detachment in search of seven army deserters. On October 20, 1824, they arrived at the Grand Pawnee village where visitors were usually welcomed cordially, but some kind of altercation occurred. The cause of the problems between Crosman and the Pawnees was never mentioned, but according to a military report written shortly after the incident, the Pawnees "robbed & illtreated them."<sup>39</sup>

Fontenelle also related how the Pawnee had made the association between the Americans and certain diseases. An American was flogged because a Pawnee who lived in the lodge where he stayed had sickened and died. According to Fontenelle, Pawnees believed the whites were the cause of the increasing mortality rate.

A number of "outrages" were described. Abraham Ledoux, a resident at one of the villages, was wounded in the spring of 1824.<sup>40</sup> It is not known what caused the altercation, but Fontenelle said, "It was then for the first time, that I heard myself the Pawns observe that they did not care for the whites, that

they would be happy to meet them in a fight to show them that the Americans could be used up like Buffaloes in a chase." In April 1826 three men were traveling to a Pawnee village when they were robbed. The Pawnees helped themselves to tobacco, hoes, and knives and then let the whites go. One of the robbers said, "it was nothing to rob a white man, they were such cowards & Dogs." Fontenelle described the Pawnees' treatment of a caravan bound for Santa Fe in 1827 as it passed the villages.

They stopped the Party & told the Partizan [caravan leader] that they must have some Tobacco & other articles to be permitted to pass. On refusal of which many of them took hold of Pack Horses & had a general scuffle with all hands. They beat the Interpreter severely, & stole several articles & had it not been for the interference of some of the chiefs & soldiers of the upper village who they feared, I am certain it would have terminated in a fight. The Party had afterward to pass the upper village & had to pay a considerable amount of goods, however, they did not appear to be hostile to the Party.

Fontenelle devoted a lengthy paragraph to the Morning Star or Holy Star ceremony. This rite was still practiced by the Loup band of the Pawnee and was one of the few cases of human sacrifice by Indians north of Mexico, a renewal ceremony to insure success in the Loups' affairs. Fontenelle had been at the Loup village, where he learned the Indians were preparing for the ritual. He returned to Bellevue on April 20, 1827, and told Joshua Pilcher of the impending sacrifice. The next day Pilcher wrote to John Dougherty at Fort Atkinson, telling him the Pawnee had a captive Cheyenne woman who was to be offered to the Morning Star by Big Axe, one of the Loup chiefs. Accompanied by some soldiers they raced to save the woman, but she was killed shortly after their arrival.<sup>41</sup>

Fontenelle concluded with his assessment of the Pawnee situation:

I will further remark, that it is my candid opinion that the Pawns knowing themselves to be a powerful Tribe, have for a long time past been under the firm belief

that no American force that could be sent against them could in the least injure or molest them. They have often said publicly & in my presence that no combined force could frighten them. All those threats are verified by their continued hostilities against the American citizens traveling on the road trading to Santa Fee and [as] well as on those who enter the upper Missouri.

After completing the interviews, Wright's unit remained at Cabanné's about two weeks. Dougherty had suggested that they visit the Pawnee villages and "endeavor to ascertain directly from themselves [the Pawnee] the true state of their feelings and disposition towards us." The agent was worried that the tribe might not welcome Wright and recommended that this portion of the trip be omitted if it seemed overly dangerous. Wright and Beauchampe decided it was safe, and on March 23 they arrived at the Tappage village, where they were received courteously by Chief Wild Horse and his people.<sup>42</sup>

After a brief stop they continued on and later in the day arrived at the Loup village. Here they met Alexander Laforce Papin, Cabanné's trader, who told them the Loups liked the Americans, but were nervous because they had stolen sixty horses and committed some other depredations the previous fall. The Loup chiefs, Big Axe and Little Spaniard, admitted that some of their young men had taken the horses from Thomas Talbot, but they promised there would be no more such incidents in the future. Despite the promises and the hospitality, Wright felt the Loups and the Tappages "notwithstanding, their constant professions of friendship, [are] a most refined race of thieves and rascals, and it was only by the constant exercise of all the vigilance in our power that we could prevent their stealing from us every article which was portable under cover of a blanket or buffaloe robe."<sup>43</sup>

Wright and Beauchampe left the Loups and on March 27 arrived on the banks of the Platte opposite the Grand

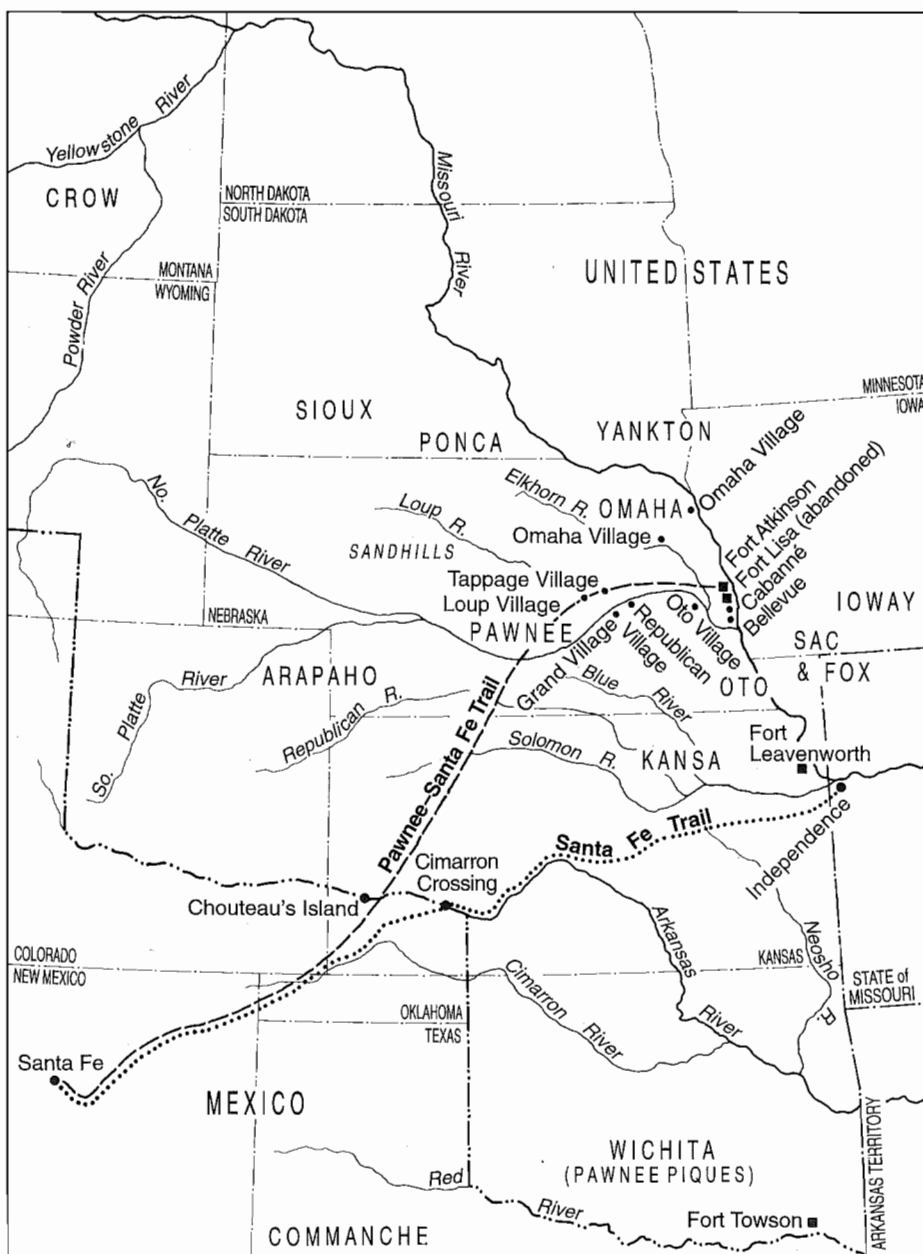


village, where they camped for the night. The next day they crossed the river "in the midst of a violent storm of snow and rain suffered considerably in our persons from the cold atmosphere and the wet state of our clothing." Wright talked to the two principal chiefs, who professed friendship for the whites but admitted that some of the young men could not be trusted.<sup>44</sup>

They also talked to Mr. LaMarche, Cabanné's trader stationed there, who told them that during the previous winter on the Republican River the Tappages killed three men whom the Pawnees said were Kickapoos, but LaMarche thought they were probably white. If three whites had been killed, some record of the event would surely have survived, so it is probable the Tappages were telling the truth. Some of the Kickapoos had lived in southwestern Missouri since the turn of the century, and it is possible they encountered the Tappages.<sup>45</sup>

LaMarche added that one of the Grand Pawnee war parties found sixty to eighty horses and mules on the Arkansas River. They were shod, indicating white ownership, but no one was there to tend the animals, so the Grands chased them and caught eight. LaMarche assessed the Grands' attitude towards the whites quite frankly. If the Grand Pawnees were to meet a small party of whites, the whites would be robbed. A large group would be treated politely. He told Wright that Bad Chief, first chief of the Grands, had said, "If the whites would once carry their threats into execution there would be nothing more heard of the Pawnees robbing and murdering" U.S. citizens.

While at the Grand Pawnee village Wright questioned the Oto Chief Ietan, who was visiting the Grands. Ietan claimed the horses the Grands brought back from the Arkansas River were stolen.<sup>46</sup> He also said Big Elk, the Omaha chief, had told him some Pawnees had killed three whites while on their last hunt, probably referring to the Tappage-Kickapoo encounter.



The investigators left the Grand village on April 1 and traveled to the Republican village, twenty-four miles away. Francis Deroin was the trader there. He had not heard of any injury to whites, but said Big Nose told him "he intended to make the Santa Fe road his home, that he would injure the whites all he could and gave for reason, that his father was one of the first chiefs of the nation but

that he ('Big Nose') was looked upon by the whites as nothing &c."

The investigation concluded at the Republican Pawnee village, and Wright and his command returned to Fort Leavenworth. On April 11 Wright wrote a report to Maj. John Bliss, the post commander. "I conclude by expressing my entire conviction that the Pawnees never entertained the most distant inten-

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tion of prosecuting an open war with the United States, but until decisive measures are taken by the government they will continue to rob and murder the whites as heretofore." Wright went on to urge that "decisive measures" be initiated to halt the raiding. On this point he had the complete support of the traders and Americans on the frontier, who complained bitterly about Indian depredations.<sup>47</sup>

Military planners must have realized there was little that could be done. If the Pawnee were to be attacked, the military force would have to be large, well equipped, and able to stay in the field for several months. Not only were there too few troops in the West for this kind of offensive, but the expense of such an undertaking would have crippled the military budget, still reeling from massive reductions earlier in the decade. The generals also had to consider the outcome of such a campaign. They could not afford another fiasco such as the one suffered in 1823, when the army tried to punish the Arikara and succeeded only in capturing some disparaging headlines in the western press. When the financial restraints and the risks were considered, the army decided against an offensive.

Both the army and the the Indian office were interested in curbing Pawnee depredations, but they largely overlooked the possibility that depredations could have been reduced through diplomatic channels, despite both the obvious clues and information gleaned from the investigation of Pawnee attitudes. For example, Big Nose's threat to raid on the Santa Fe Trail resulted, in part, from a breach of etiquette. Such a breach was not uncommon because whites rarely attempted to observe protocol within the tribes they visited. As a result grave insults occurred, but they were probably resulted more from ignorance than from malice. Martin Dorion pointed out that traders who did not treat the Indians fairly ran the risk of being mistreated, and Fontenelle alluded to the growing awareness by the Paw-

nee that contagious diseases were being transmitted from the whites.

The whites were also guilty of meddling in Pawnee internal affairs. The Loups had not forgotten, and many of them would not soon forgive, the Americans for disrupting the Morning Star ceremony in 1827. Finally, there was the matter of trespass, which had been addressed in the treaty of 1825. The Pawnee were expected to relinquish a right of way without any remuneration except a vague promise of future gifts offered at the discretion of the president. Although these were areas in which negotiations could have reduced tensions, no action was taken. Had an effort been made it is likely a more peaceful interaction would have resulted.

Although no peace treaties were signed and no campaigns were launched, the threat from the Pawnee began to diminish within months. In the early fall of 1831 the tribe was decimated by an outbreak of smallpox that Dougherty estimated killed one-half of the people. Even if he exaggerated, the epidemic was so severe that the Pawnee fled to the buffalo hunting country, leaving bodies unburied in the villages. In 1844 U.S. Dragoons visited the Pawnee and estimated the tribe's population at some 7,000, compared to the 1825 estimate of more than 10,000.<sup>48</sup> When the army again assessed Pawnee strength in the mid-1850s, the tribe's former power had not been forgotten, but its numbers had continued to decline. Lt. Gouverneur Kemble Warren wrote: "The Pawnee were formerly one of the most numerous and powerful and warlike of the Indians of the prairie. They have, through the agency of the small-pox and their constant wars with the Dakotas and Shyennes been greatly reduced, and their numbers now do not probably exceed 4,000."<sup>49</sup> Warren's population estimate indicates there would have been only about five hundred fighting men in contrast to the army's estimate of 2,050 warriors thirty years earlier. As a result of this appalling loss, the tribe was becoming both disorganized and demoral-

ized. In spite of these tragic circumstances the Pawnees continued to defend their land, but it was a hopeless effort in the face of the increasing numbers of white invaders and relentless attacks by the Sioux. In 1854 the tribe was placed on a reservation in what is now Nance County, Nebraska, where it remained for approximately twenty years before being moved to another reservation in Oklahoma.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Lucien Fontenelle to John Dougherty, Feb. 26, 1829, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Upper Missouri Agency (National Archives Microfilm Publication M234, roll 883), Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter cited as Upper Missouri Agency letters). A similar sentiment was expressed earlier. Dougherty to William Clark, Nov. 4, 1828, *ibid*.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Wilhelm, *Travels in North America*, Savoie Lottinville, ed., W. Robert Nitske, trans. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 389.

<sup>3</sup> Dougherty to James Barbour, June 28, 1827, and Dougherty to Clark, Nov. 4, 1828, Upper Missouri Agency letters. Dougherty had been a fur trader for a number of years and was well acquainted with the Pawnee. In 1827 he was named agent for the Upper Missouri Agency, an area that included the Pawnee, Oto, Omaha, and other tribes north of the Platte and west of the Missouri River. Merrill J. Mattes, "John Dougherty," in Leroy R. Hafen, ed., *The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West* 8 (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1971), 113-41; Edward E. Hill, *The Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-1840, Historical Sketches* (New York: Clearwater Publishing Co., 1974).

<sup>4</sup> Roger L. Nichols, "General Henry Atkinson's Report of the Yellowstone Expedition," *Nebraska History* 44 (June 1963): 73.

<sup>5</sup> John C. Ewers, "Chiefs from the Missouri and Mississippi and Peale's Silhouettes of 1806," *The Smithsonian Institution Journal of History* 1 (1966): 24; Herman J. Viola, *Diplomats in Buckskins: A History of Indian Delegations in Washington City* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1981), 25.

<sup>6</sup> George Catlin met an Assiniboin in 1832, who had just returned from a trip to Washington, D.C. This chief told his people about the wonders he had seen, but the tribe did not believe him and was "setting him down as a liar and impostor." George Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians* (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1841), 57; John Treat Irving Jr., *Indian Sketches Taken during an Expedition to the Pawnee Tribes*, John Francis

McDermott, ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955), 7.

<sup>7</sup> In 1819 the army's Yellowstone Expedition halted at the Council Bluffs and established Cantonment Missouri. It was destroyed by a flood, and a new fort was built and officially named Fort Atkinson in 1821. From time to time other units joined the Sixth before the fort was abandoned in 1827. Roger L. Nichols, *General Henry Atkinson, A Western Military Career* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), 62, 72, 116.

<sup>8</sup> Edwin James, *An Account of an Expedition to the Rocky Mountains*, vol. 14 of *Early Western Travels, 1748–1846*, Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed. (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1905), 259. Big Elk was the longtime leader of one faction of the Omaha tribe. Dougherty to Clark, Nov. 4, 1828, Upper Missouri Agency letters.

<sup>9</sup> Doane Robinson, "Official Correspondence of the Leavenworth Expedition into South Dakota in 1823," *South Dakota Historical Collections* 1 (1902): 181–256; Dougherty to Clark, Nov. 4, 1828, Upper Missouri Agency letters.

<sup>10</sup> Gen. Henry Atkinson's report dated Oct. 20, 1824, quoted in Dale L. Morgan, *The West of William H. Ashley* (Denver: Old West Publishing Co., 1964), 258 n.26.

<sup>11</sup> An average beaver pelt was worth five dollars in St. Louis in 1822. Dale L. Morgan, *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1953), 44. In 1822 William H. Ashley advertised for one hundred men to go to the mountains for two years as trappers. Morgan, *The West of William H. Ashley*, 1.

<sup>12</sup> Fontenelle to R. P. Beauchampe, Mar. 12, 1829, and Fontenelle to Dougherty, Feb. 26, 1829, Upper Missouri Agency letters. Warren Angus Ferris, traveling with a caravan of fur trappers, witnessed toll-taking in 1830, noting his party "sent, as customary, a present of tobacco, powder, balls etc., to these tribute-taking lords of the forest." After receiving the gift a Pawnee chief came to the whites' camp "to pay us a visit and acknowledge our courtesy." W. A. Ferris, *Life in the Rocky Mountains*, Paul C. Phillips, ed. (Denver: Old West Publishing Company, 1940), 23.

<sup>13</sup> Spain had closed the borders of Mexico to foreign traders, but after Mexico won its independence in 1820, foreign traders were welcomed. James Ohio Pattie wrote about his experiences in 1824 on the Pawnee-Santa Fe Trail. James O. Pattie, *The Personal Narrative of James Ohio Pattie of Kentucky*, vol. 18 of *Early Western Travels, 1748–1846*, Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed. (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1905).

<sup>14</sup> Otis E. Young, *The First Military Escort on the Santa Fe Trail* (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1952), 15–24. In 1825 the U.S. Army was ordered to provide escorts for the Santa Fe traders as far as the Mexican border, but the returning caravans and those in Mexican territory were without protection.

<sup>15</sup> Wilhelm, *Travels in North America*, 389–90; *Missouri Intelligencer*, Oct. 25, 1824. The Pawnee raiders were not always successful. Surgeon John Gale at Fort Atkinson was told, "The Pawnees were lately overtaken in a prairie by a party of Spaniards from whom they had stolen horses. All were killed or surrendered amounting to one Hundred." Roger L. Nichols, *The Missouri Expedition 1818–1820, The Journal of Surgeon John Gale with Related Documents* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), 84.

<sup>16</sup> David M. Brugge, "Vizcarra's Navajo Campaign of 1823," *Arizona and the West* 6 (Autumn 1964): 223–44.

<sup>17</sup> *Niles Weekly Register*, June 24, 1824, 252–53. James M. Covington, "Correspondence Between Mexican Officials at Santa Fe and Officials in Missouri, 1823–1825," *Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society* 16 (October 1959): 20–32; Morgan, *The West of William H. Ashley*, 360.

<sup>18</sup> John C. Calhoun to Clark, June 14, 1824, Letters Sent by the Office of Indian Affairs, vol. 1, Mar. 18, 1824, to May 3, 1825 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M21, roll 1), Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, NARA. Apparently the Mexicans were equally determined to deal directly with the Pawnee. In February 1824 the Mexican governor wrote to O'Fallon, and his letter was translated and published in the *Missouri Intelligencer* (June 5, 1824) stating, "This treaty will not be made with Major O'Fallon, but with the Indians, under his advice and in his presence."

<sup>19</sup> Fontenelle to Dougherty, Feb. 26, 1829, Upper Missouri Agency letters.

<sup>20</sup> *Missouri Intelligencer*, Oct. 25, 1824. Informal agreements between tribal leaders and their agents were not uncommon. Beauchampe to Dougherty, Oct. 26, 1829, Upper Missouri Agency letters.

<sup>21</sup> Kate L. Gregg, *The Road to Santa Fe* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1952), 231, 156.

<sup>22</sup> Charles J. Kappler, *Indian Affairs Laws and Treaties* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), 258–59.

<sup>23</sup> All of the foregoing Dougherty quotes are from Dougherty to Clark, Nov. 4, 1828, Upper Missouri Agency letters.

<sup>24</sup> Dougherty to John Eaton, Oct. 27, 1829, and Beauchampe to Eaton, Jan. 1, 1830, Upper Missouri Agency letters. Beauchampe died of cholera in August 1833, shortly after the agency headquarters was moved from Fort Leavenworth to Bellevue. Louise Barry, *The Beginning of the West: Annals of the Kansas Gateway to the American West, 1540–1854* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1972), 240.

<sup>25</sup> Dougherty to "Sir," Feb. 20, 1829, Upper Missouri Agency letters.

<sup>26</sup> After his service in the West, Wright advanced steadily in the army. He served in the Seminole

War, the Mexican War, and the Civil War. In 1865 he was given command of the Department of the Columbia, and he and his wife, Margaret, boarded the steamship *Brother Jonathan* at San Francisco bound for his headquarters at Fort Vancouver. On July 30, off the California coast, the ship struck a reef and sank. Most of the passengers, including the Wrights, were drowned. Carl P. Schlicke, *General George Wright, Guardian of the Pacific Coast* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988).

Fort Leavenworth was founded in May 1827 by troops of the Third Infantry. It was officially named for Henry Leavenworth on Feb. 8, 1832. Elvid Hunt, *History of Fort Leavenworth, 1827–1927* (Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: The General Service Schools Press, 1926).

Lt. Edwin Burr Babbitt, Third Infantry, was with one of the companies involved in the establishment of Cantonment Leavenworth. Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1903), 177. Babbitt kept a journal of the questioning at Cabanne's post. Despite an exhaustive search, with help from National Archives personnel, the original journal could not be located. DeAnne Blanton, Military Reference Branch, NARA, to author, Aug. 5, 1991. It has been necessary to rely upon "Extracts from the journal kept by 2d Lieut. Babbitt for a detachment of the 3d under the command of 1st Lieut. G. Wright while at Council Bluffs during the month of March 1829," Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series), 1822–60 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M567, roll 48, frame 0609-0627) Records of the Adjutant General's Office, Record Group 94, NARA (hereafter cited as M567, roll 48).

<sup>27</sup> Ray H. Mattison, "John Pierre Cabanne," *The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West* 2 (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1965), 69–73.

<sup>28</sup> The handwriting in Babbitt's journal leaves room for interpretation, but the name is probably Louis La Jeunesse. There were several early fur traders with this surname. John Luttig met a La Jeunesse on the Missouri in 1812. John C. Luttig, *Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812–1813*, Stella A. Drumm, ed. (New York: Argosy-Antiquarian Ltd., 1964), 34.

At least two men bore the name Knife Chief. Melburn D. Thurman, "The Skidi Morning Star Sacrifice of 1827," *Nebraska History* 51 (Fall 1970): 272. A Knife Chief signed the Treaty of 1825. Kappler, *Indian Affairs*, 260.

<sup>29</sup> Beauchampe to Dougherty, Oct. 26, 1829, Upper Missouri Agency letters. Big Eyes' village was on the Elkhorn River. Big Elk's band had lived along the Missouri River in present Dakota County, Nebraska, but had been forced to abandon this village due to raids by the Sacs of the Mississippi and the Yankton Sioux. Three years later they had returned to the Missouri. Beauchampe to Dougherty, Oct. 26, 1829, and Dougherty to Clark, Nov. 20, 1832, Upper Missouri Agency letters.

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<sup>30</sup> Jonathan L. Bean received his appointment as subagent in July 1827, and was stationed in present-day central South Dakota. Bean to Elbert Herring, Oct. 29, 1834, and Dougherty to Clark, May 18, 1829, Upper Missouri Agency letters.

<sup>31</sup> Dougherty to Clark, Oct. 29, 1831, Upper Missouri Agency letters; Isaac McCoy, *History of Baptist Indian Missions* (Washington, D.C.: W. M. Morrison, 1940), 443.

<sup>32</sup> Fontenelle to Beauchampe, Mar. 12, 1829. This letter was copied from an earlier one Fontenelle sent to John Dougherty on Feb. 25, 1829, both Upper Missouri Agency letters. Alan C. Trotman, "Lucien Fontenelle," *The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West* 5 (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1966), 81–99. In 1829 Fontenelle lived at Bellevue, where a trading post was founded in the latter part of 1822. In 1832 he sold it to the government, and it became Dougherty's agency headquarters. Fontenelle moved a few hundred yards downstream and built a new home. Richard E. Jensen, "Bellevue: The First Twenty Years, 1822–1842," *Nebraska History* 56 (Fall 1975): 339–74.

<sup>33</sup> James, *An Account of an Expedition*, 40, 203–6. In an attempt to punish the Pawnee, General Atkinson issued an order "to inhibit all trade with the tribes till proper restitution is made, which, I have no doubt, will be promptly done." Nichols, *The Missouri Expedition*, 113. In May 1820 the army recovered sixty horses, twenty of which were army property. *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>34</sup> James, *An Account of an Expedition*, 225–27. Trader Michael Immell ransomed the captives in September 1819. Nichols, *The Missouri Expedition*, 75. The prisoners recuperated at Fort Lisa. Richard Edward Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa and the Opening of the Missouri Fur Trade* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 174–75.

<sup>35</sup> The identity of "Mr. Stotts" remains a mystery. Barry in *The Beginning of the West*, 116, mentions Augustus Storrs, who accompanied a Santa Fe-bound caravan in 1824. Pierre Narcisse Leclerc was an independent trader who brought about the exile of Cabanne from Indian country. In 1831 Cabanne abducted him for allegedly smuggling alcohol up the Missouri River in violation of the government prohibition. When Leclerc sued Cabanne, the latter left the trade rather than risk revocation of his company's trading license. Hiram M. Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West* (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1936), 1:348–49.

<sup>36</sup> Morgan, *The West of William H. Ashley*, 257. LeRoy R. and Ann W. Hafen, "Thomas Fitzpatrick," *The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West* 7 (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1969), 88.

<sup>37</sup> This may be the party which left Santa Fe on August 15, 1828, and lost seven hundred horses. Young, *The First Military Escort on the Santa Fe Trail*, 16–19. Josiah Gregg, who may have talked to some of the participants, said the party lost one thousand mules and horses. Josiah Gregg, *Com-*

*merce of the Prairies*, Max L. Moorhead, ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 19. On September 1 a second party left and was robbed of 125 horses. Henry Inman, *The Old Santa Fe Trail: The Story of a Great Highway* (Topeka, Crane and Co., 1916), 68–74.

<sup>38</sup> Pattie, *Personal Narrative*, 332; Barry, *The Beginning of the West*, 119.

<sup>39</sup> Gen. Henry Atkinson's report in Dale L. Morgan, *The West of William H. Ashley* (Denver, 1964), 258 n.26.

<sup>40</sup> Abraham Ledoux and his brother, Antoine, had been to the upper Missouri with Manuel Lisa in 1812. They made their home with the Pawnee until the mid-1820s, when they went to New Mexico. It was Antoine who was shot by the Pawnee. Janet Lecompte, "Antoine and Abraham Ledoux," *The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West* 3 (Glendale, Calif: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1966), 177.

<sup>41</sup> Joshua Pilcher was a partner in the reorganized Missouri Fur Company with field headquarters at Bellevue. John E. Sunder, *Joshua Pilcher: Fur Trader and Indian Agent* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), 50ff. For the Pilcher letter see Dorothy V. Jones, "John Dougherty and the Pawnee Rite of Human Sacrifice," *Missouri Historical Review* 63 (April 1969): 298; Thurman, "The Skidi Pawnee Morning Star Sacrifice of 1827," 271, 274.

<sup>42</sup> Dougherty to "Sir," Feb. 20, 1829, Upper Missouri Agency letters. Lieutenant Wright recorded these events in a journal, but unfortunately only an edited transcription, which begins on March 23 at the Tappage village, seems to have survived. The National Archives found no evidence the original journal entered military custody and was of the opinion it had remained in Wright's possession. DeAnne Blanton, Military Reference Branch, NARA, to author, Aug. 5, 1991. The transcription is from frames 0628-0637, M567, roll 48.

In 1833 John Treat Irving met a Wild Horse and said he was the "principal warrior" of the Grand Pawnee. Irving, *Indian Sketches*, 125. This does not preclude the possibility of a Tappage named Wild Horse. Little Chief was the leader of the Tappages in 1833. Kappler, *Indian Affairs*, 417.

<sup>43</sup> Alexander Laforce Papin had been a resident trader at the Loup village for a number of years and was married to a Loup woman. E. G. Platt, "Some Experiences of a Teacher Among the Pawnee," *Kansas State Historical Society Collections* 14 (1915–18): 785. His association with the Pawnee dates at least to 1819, when he witnessed a treaty between the United States and the tribe. Kappler, *Indian Affairs*, 159.

Wright listed both Antoine and Big Axe, with the latter in quotation marks. This, and the phrasing that follows, suggests it is another name for Antoine. Jones has speculated on this possibility in her article. Jones, "John Dougherty and the

Pawnee Rite of Human Sacrifice," 298. Alphonso Wetmore uses the name "Antoine." Alphonso Wetmore, *Gazetteer of the State of Missouri* (St. Louis, 1837), 344. Joshua Pilcher warned the Indian office of the impending sacrifice and called the chief Big Axe. According to Dougherty the party included "Messrs T Talbot, Elisha Stanty, Wm Wolfskill Edward M Ryland James Fielding James Collins and Solomon Hawk." The raid occurred on the Arkansas River on October 12, 1827. Dougherty to Clark, June 23, 1828, Upper Missouri Agency letters.

Thomas Talbot's party went to Santa Fe in the fall of 1826 and traded merchandise for horses and mules. They left Santa Fe in the spring and were robbed, probably in present Edwards County, Kansas. Talbot and his companions signed a petition asking the U.S. Congress to reimburse them for their losses, but the request was denied. James W. Covington, "A Robbery on the Santa Fe Trail, 1827," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 21 (Autumn 1955): 562.

<sup>44</sup> Later, Lieutenant Wright identified them as Bad Chief and Sun Chief, the first two signers of the 1825 treaty. Kappler, *Indian Affairs*, 259.

<sup>45</sup> George R. Nielson, *The Kickapoo People* (Phoenix: Indian Tribal Series, 1975), 32–33. Big Elk also told Lieutenant Wright the three were white.

<sup>46</sup> Irving, *Indian Sketches*, 7–82. Horses and mules were accidentally lost. Archibald Gamble talked to a party of returning Santa Fe traders in 1825, who told him they had lost one hundred horses and mules when they stampeded with a herd of buffalo. George Sibley, who assisted in the survey of the Santa Fe Trail in 1825, also mentioned that horses tended to run with buffalo rather than away from them. Gregg, *The Road to Santa Fe*, 230.

<sup>47</sup> Wright to John Bliss, Apr. 11, 1829, frames 0628-0630, Microcopy 567, roll 48.

<sup>48</sup> Dougherty to Clark, Oct. 29, 1831, Upper Missouri Agency letters. Isaac McCoy, a missionary in Indian territory, estimated that three thousand died. McCoy, *History of Baptist Indian Missions*, 443; "The Expedition of Major Clifton Wharton in 1844," *Kansas Historical Collections* 16 (1923–25): 287.

<sup>49</sup> Gouverneur Kemble Warren, *Preliminary Report of Explorations in Nebraska and Dakota in the Years 1855–'56–'57* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1875), 51.